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# CLIVE BARKER



THE THIEF OF ALWAYS  
BOOK ONE

CLIVE BARKER'S  
THE THIEF OF ALWAYS™





Clive Barker's  
**The Thief of Always**

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The great gray beast February had eaten Haroey Swick alive. Buried in the belly of that smothering month, he wondered if he would ever find his way out.



More than likely he'd become so bored as the hours crawled by that one day he'd simply forget to breathe.



His demise would become a celebrated mystery, which wouldn't be solved until some great detective decided to recreate a day in Haroey's life.



The detective would follow Haroey's dismal routine—from home, to school, and back again.

—finally rendering the obvious verdict.











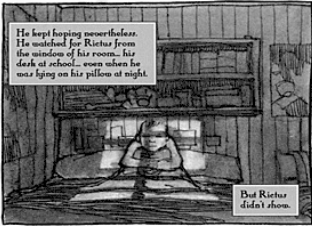




Harvey said nothing about his peculiar visitor to either his mom or his dad, but the trouble with keeping the visit a secret was that after a few days he began to wonder if he'd imagined the whole thing.



He kept hoping nevertheless. He watched for Rietus from the window of his room... his desk at school... even when he was lying on his pillow at night.



But Rietus didn't show.

And then...



I WAS STARTING TO THINK I'D INVENTED YOU, YOU KNOW, LIKE A DREAM.

I GET THAT A LOT, YOU LIKE MY SHOES?

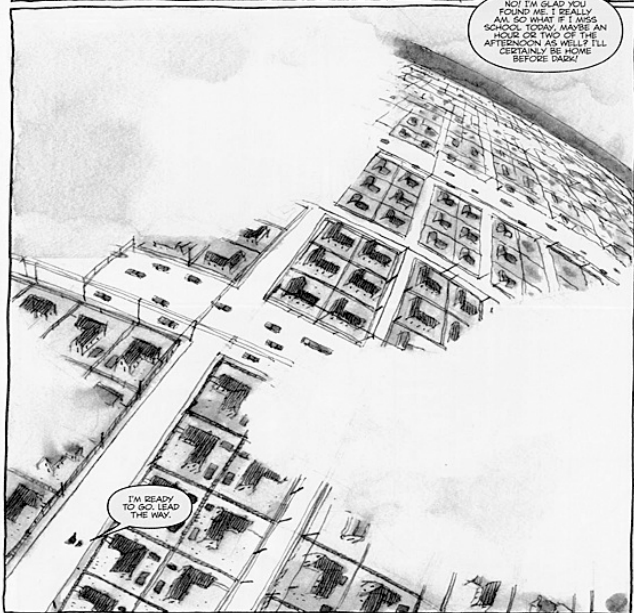


I GOT GIVEN 'EM BY MY BOSS. HE'S VERY HAPPY YOU'RE GOING TO COME VISIT.

SO ARE YOU READY?







The unlikely pair walk  
and walk and walk...

I HATE  
THE FOG!  
JUST HATE IT!  
AND THERE'LL  
BE RAIN BY  
NOON. WE'LL BE  
OUT OF IT, OF  
COURSE...

I KNOW  
WHAT YOU'RE  
THINKING—THIS IS  
ALL A TRICK.  
BUT HE IS LEADING  
YOU ON A MYSTERY  
TOUR AND THERE'S  
NOTHING AT THE  
END OF IT.

MAYBE A  
LITTLE...

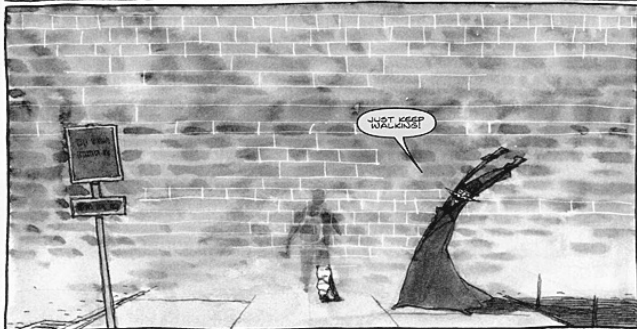
WELL,  
MY BOY,  
I'VE GOT  
SEAS FOR  
YOU.

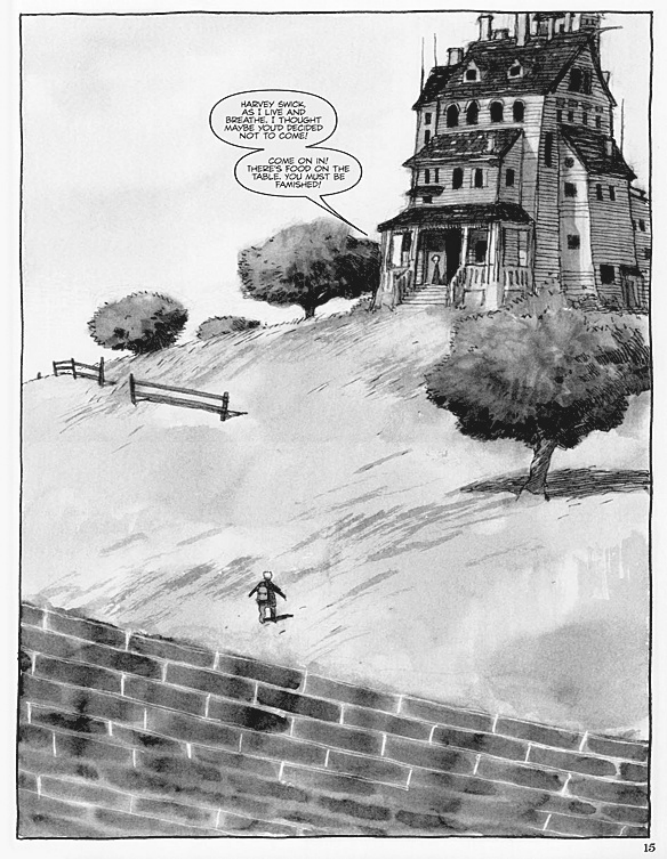
LOOK UP  
AHEAD...

WHAT  
DO YOU  
SEE?

A WALL...

IT LOOKS  
LIKE A WALL  
BUT IT'S NOT  
A WALL.





HARVEY SWICK,  
AS I LIVE AND  
BREATHE, I THOUGHT  
MAYBE YOU'D DECIDED  
NOT TO COME!

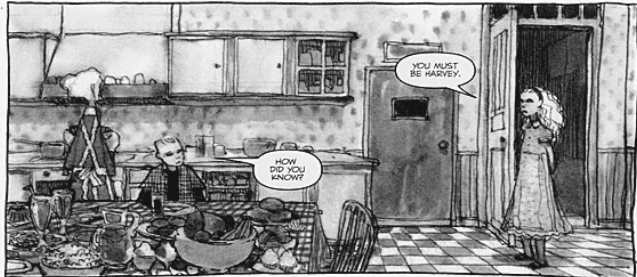
COME ON IN!  
THERE'S FOOD ON THE  
TABLE. YOU MUST BE  
FAMISHED!



















Hours later...

YOU'RE  
THE FIRST KID  
WHO'S BEEN  
REAL FUN!

WHAT  
ABOUT  
LULU?

SHE  
WAS OKAY  
WHEN I FIRST  
ARRIVED...

...BUT SHE'S  
GOTTEN WEIRD IN  
THE LAST FEW DAYS;  
WANDERIN' AROUND LIKE  
SHE'S SLEEPWALKIN',  
WITH A BLANK  
EXPRESSION ON  
HER FACE.

WHAT DO  
YOU WANT TO DO  
TODAY? IT'S GOING  
TO BE REAL HOT.  
IT ALWAYS IS.

IS THERE  
ANYWHERE WE  
CAN SWIM?

WELL, YES.  
THERE'S A LAKE  
AROUND THE OTHER  
SIDE OF THE HOUSE,  
BUT YOU WON'T  
LIKE IT MUCH.

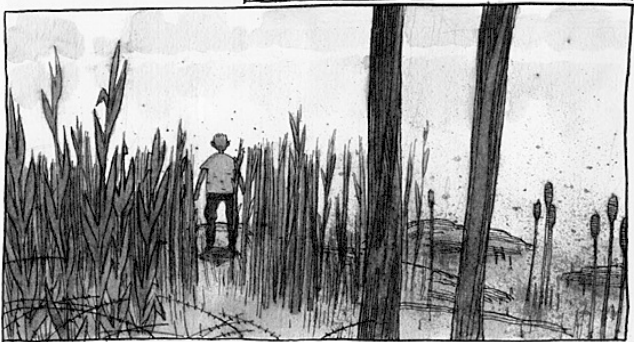
ARE THERE  
ANY FISH? MAYBE  
WE COULD CATCH  
SOME FOR MRS.  
GRIFFIN TO  
COOK!

OH!

CRASH!

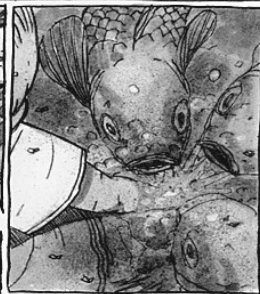
YOU DON'T WANT TO  
DO THAT! I WOULDN'T WANT  
YOU... TO GET SICK. THE  
FISH ARE... POISONOUS,  
YOU SEE.

NOW I  
REALLY  
HAVE  
TO SEE  
THOSE  
FISH...



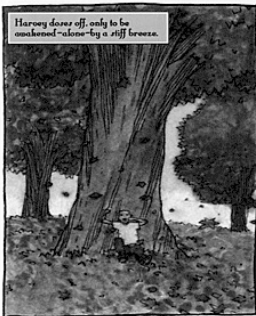








Harvey dozes off, only to be awakened—alone—by a stiff breeze.





With night fallen, Haroey and Wendell prepare for trick-or-treat...



WHERE DID THEY ALL COME FROM?

MR. HOOD COLLECTS THEM.



TAKE YOUR PICK, THERE'S BOUND TO BE A VAMPIRE SOMEWHERE. I'M GONNA BE A HANGMAN.



WHERE DO WE GO TRICK-OR-TREATING? OUT IN THE STREET?

NO, IT'S NOT HALLOWEEN OUT IN THE REAL WORLD, REMEMBER? WE'RE GOING AROUND TO THE BACK OF THE HOUSE.

The trip, usually taking no more than a minute or two, seemed to last forever.

LOOK!



WHAT IS THAT, WENDELL?



WENDELL?  
WHERE ARE  
YOU?



I KNOW WHAT  
YOU'RE DOING, AND  
YOU WON'T SCARE  
ME THAT EASY.  
HEAR ME?

CREAK





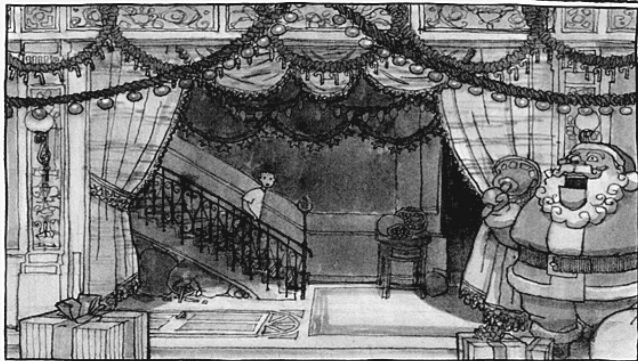
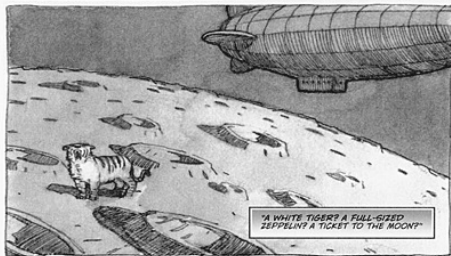


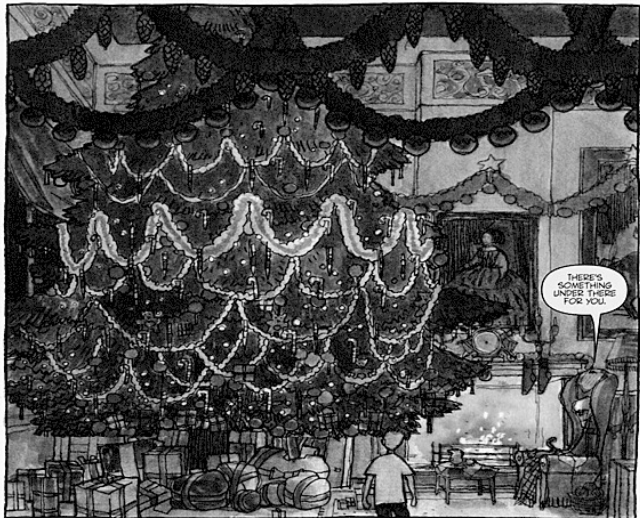






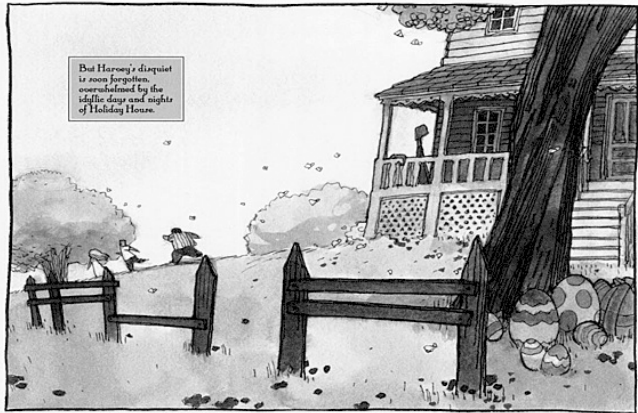








But Haroey's disquiet  
is soon forgotten,  
overwhelmed by the  
idyllic days and nights  
of Holiday House.

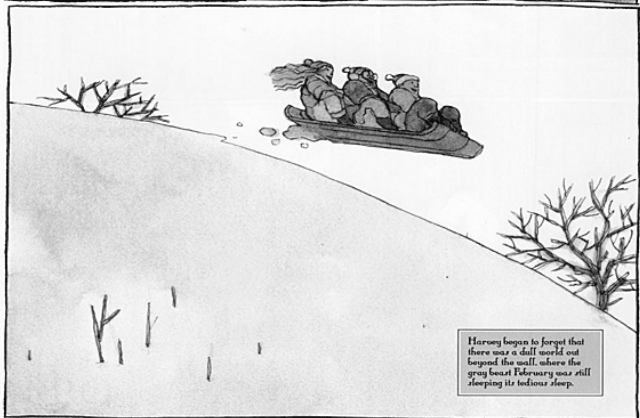


Seasons pass in  
the course of a day.





Holidays come,  
and come again.



Harvey began to forget that  
there was a dull world out  
beyond the wall, where the  
gray bear February was still  
sleeping its tedious sleep.



His only real reminder of the life he'd left, besides a second telephone call he'd made to his mom and dad just to tell them all was well...



...was the present he'd wished for, and received, that first Christmas: his ark.



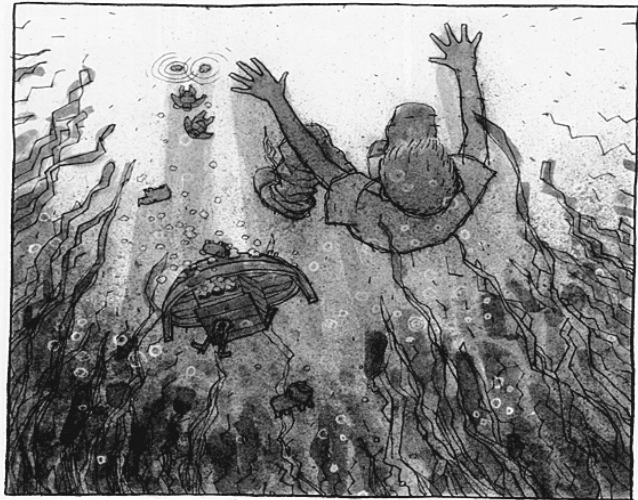
He'd thought several times of trying it out on the lake, to see if it would float.



But it wasn't until the afternoon of the seventh day that he got around to doing so.









The lake now  
had something  
that he'd owned.



His possessions had gone  
into a nightmare place, full  
of monstrous things, and he  
felt as though a little part  
of himself had gone down  
with it, down into the dark.



Despite all entertainments that  
the Holiday House supplied so  
eagerly, it was a haunted place.



Whoever, or whatever, that  
haunter was, Harvey could not  
be content now until he'd seen  
its face and knew its nature...

To Be Continued.

More magic and mystery  
abound in  
**CLIVE BARKER'S**  
**THE THIEF OF ALWAYS™**  
BOOK TWO

**March 2005**



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# CLIVE BARKER'S THE THIEF OF ALWAYS™



Young Harvey Swick is bored with life and looking for excitement. He finds it in the form of Mr. Hood's Holiday House, a place that has stood for a thousand years, welcoming countless children into its embrace. It's a place of miracles, a blissful round of treats and seasons, where every childhood whim may be satisfied... for a price, as Harvey comes to learn.

*The Thief of Always* marked Master of Horror Clive Barker's first venture in writing an all-ages tale, and now his classic novel finds new life in this lavishly illustrated adaptation, courtesy of writer Kris Oprisko and artist Gabriel Hernandez.



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